

**Testimony
Dennis Waz
Public Utilities Superintendent, City of Meriden
Before the
Environment Committee
February 19, 2014**

**HB- 5081 - AN ACT CONCERNING PHOSPHOROUS REDUCTION
REIMBURSEMENTS TO MUNICIPALITIES.**

I would like to comment in support of HB-5081, which increases the percentage of costs that may be eligible for reimbursement under the Clean Water Fund for phosphorus removal projects from 30% to 50%.

Although the City of Meriden is in the process of negotiating permit language with the state Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) relative to phosphorus reduction, the City will have to invest an additional \$13 million to upgrade the Water Pollution Control Facility and add approximately \$600,000 to the annual operating budget. This places a considerable burden on residents and businesses during very challenging economic times.

This is particularly troubling for our residents because we may not be eligible for Clean Water Funds based on the point system used by DEEP because we have already received funding for phosphorus reduction. In 2008 when the City of Meriden was upgrading its wastewater treatment plant we were advised to upgrade to the 0.7 mg/l phosphorus limit, which we did.

Unfortunately, after the upgrade was completed, Meriden staff, as well as representatives from other plants on the Quinnipiac and Naugatuck Rivers, were invited to the DEEP office and advised that the EPA did not accept the state's program for phosphorus removal and DEEP therefore developed a new "interim" strategy for phosphorus removal which lowered Meriden's limit from 0.7 to 0.1mg/l.

Given the enormous compliance costs associated with achieving phosphorus limits set by the state, we urge lawmakers to support **HB-5081 which would increase the reimbursement level for phosphorus reduction projects from 30% to 50% and also ensure that cities like Meriden that have been subject to ongoing plant upgrades will be eligible for Clean Water Funds under the point system DEEP utilizes to award such grants.**

We also agree that language included in lines 52 to 67 of the bill should be deleted inasmuch as this would no longer be valid criteria given the other changes to the bill, specifically, "In providing funding under this subdivision, the commissioner shall give priority, first to projects with the lowest permitted limit of phosphorus discharge as contained in a valid discharge permit issued pursuant to section 22a-430, and then to those that remove the greatest amount of phosphorus, as measured in pounds per year."